Worksheet
DNA-NM-060-2003-051
Interim
Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy (DNA)

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

Note: This Worksheet is to be completed consistent with the policies stated in the Instruction Memorandum entitled, "Documentation of Land Use Plan conformance and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Adequacy" transmitting this worksheet and the "Guidelines for using the DNA Worksheet," located at the end of the Worksheet.

PART I. Proposed Action and Analysis

A. Describe the Proposed Action

To clarify the Decision for EA NM-060-99-012, issued to authorize the issuance of a ten year grazing permit to W.H. and W.E. Corn Estates for Allotment 63034. The Decision was to issue the permit for 676 Aus Active Use and 324 Aus of Temporary Non-Use at 63% FR from March 1 to February 28. The EA analyzed the impacts of grazing of 676 Animal Units, and stated that grazing would continue under the same management system, a best pasture rotation system, and at the same permitted numbers as they have in the past. Past permitted numbers have been at 676 Animal Units Active use for the last three ten year permits. This DNA is done to clarify the Decision to allow issuance of a ten year grazing permit to W.H. and W.E. Corn Estates for Allotment 63034 for 676 Aus Active Use at 63% FR from March 1 to February 28.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name* Roswell Resource Management Plan Date Approved October, 1997

* List applicable LUPs (e.g., Resource Management Plans and activity, project, management, or program plans, or applicable amendments thereto)

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms and conditions): Appendix 8, Decisions Carried Forward, page AP8-1: #2. All allotments will be classified as suitable for yearlong grazing.

C. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

List by name and date all applicable NEPA documents that cover the proposed action.

EA NM-060-99-012, dated August 9 , 1999

List by name and date other documentation relevant to the proposed action (e.g., biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation, and monitoring

reports).

Historical Grazing Case File documents for Allotment 63034.

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the current proposed action substantially the same action (or is a part of that action) as previously analyzed? Is the current proposed action located at a site specifically analyzed in an existing document?

Documentation of answer and explanation:
Yes, the existing EA analyzes the impacts of continued grazing at the 676 Animal Unit level.

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the current proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

The range of alternatives covered in the EA were to issue the ten year permit at the 676 Animal Units at 63% pl for 5,111 Animal Unit Months Active Use and 324 Animal Units at 63% pl for 2449 Animal Unit Months Temporary Non Use or to not issue the permit, thereby not authorizing grazing at all on Allotment 63034

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances?

Documentation of answer and explanation:
The analysis was to continue at the historical level of 676 Animal Units year long at 63% pl for 5,111 Animal Unit Months Active Use. No analysis was done on adding the 324 Animal Units year long at 63% pl for 2,449 Animal Unit Months in Temporary Non-Use.

4. Do the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current proposed action?

Documentation of answer and explanation:
Yes, all factors for continuing at the 676 Animal Units/5,111 Animal Unit Months in Active use were analyzed and completed by an interdisciplinary team

5. Are the direct and indirect impacts of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA document(s)? Does the existing NEPA document analyze site-specific impacts related to the current proposed action?

Documentation of answer and explanation:
No new direct or indirect impacts have been identified, since the initial proposed action. Yes, the existing EA does analyze the impacts of the current proposed action of authorizing the issuance of a ten year permit for 676 Animal Units year long at 63% pl for 5,111 Animal Unit Months.

6. Are the cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

Documentation of answer and explanation:
Yes, the cumulative impacts are the same as those identified in the existing Environmental Assessment. There are no additional cumulative impacts with the proposed action.

7. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA documents(s) adequate for the current proposed action?

Documentation of answer and explanation:
Yes, the public involvement and interagency review associated with the existing EA is adequate for the current proposed action.

E. Interdisciplinary Analysis: Identify those team members conducting or participating in the NEPA analysis and preparation of this worksheet.

Name	Title
Helen C.J. Miller	Range Management Specialist, Roswell Field Office
Howard Parman	Planning Coordinator, RFO
John Spain	Lead Range Management Specialist, RFO

Conclusion

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

Note: If you found that one or more of these criteria is not met, you will not be able to check this box.

/s/ T. R. Kreager
Signature of the Responsible Official

Date

PART II: DECISION. I have reviewed this plan conformance and NEPA compliance record and have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan(s) and that no further environmental analysis is required. I have determined that no further environmental analysis beyond the Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy shown above is required. It is my decision to implement the proposed action, as described, with the mitigation measures (if any) identified below.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.2, any applicant, permittee, lessee, or other affected interests may protest this proposed decision in person or in writing to the authorized officer at 2909 West Second St., Roswell, NM 88201, within 15 days after receipt of this decision. Please be specific in your points of protest. In the absence of a protest, this decision will become final without further notice.

Written appeal may be filed to the Final Decision for the purpose of a hearing before an administrative law judge under 43 CFR 4.470. A period of 30 days after receipt of the Final Decision is provided in which to file an appeal in this office. (43 CFR 4160.3 (c)).

T. R. Kreager, Date
Assisting Field Officer Manager, Resources

DECISION RECORD

Decision: It is my decision to authorize the issuance of a ten year grazing permit to W.H. and W.E. Corn Estate for Allotment #63034. The lease will be for 676 AUs active use and 324 AUs of temporary non-use at 63% FR from March 1 to the end of February. Any additional mitigation measures identified in the environmental impacts sections of the attached environmental assessment have been formulated into stipulations, terms and conditions. Any comments made to this proposed action were considered and any necessary changes have been incorporated into the environmental assessment.

The fundamentals of rangeland health are identified in 43 CFR §§4180.1 and pertain to watershed function, ecological processes, water quality and habitat for threatened and endangered species and other special status species. Based on the available data and professional judgement, the evaluation by this environmental assessment indicates that the conditions identified in the fundamentals of rangeland health exist on the allotment.

If you wish to protest this proposed decision in accordance with 43 CFR §§4160.2, you are allowed 15 days to do so in person or in writing to the authorized officer, after the receipt of this decision. In the absence of a protest, this proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice, in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3. Please be specific in your points of protest. A period of 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final, is provided for filing an appeal and petition for the stay of the decision, for the purpose of a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge (43 CFR 4.470).

The appeal shall be filed with the office of the Field Office Manager, 2909 West Second, Roswell, NM, and must state clearly and concisely your specific points.

Signed by T. R Kreager — 8/9/99
Assistant Field Manager — Date

Environmental Assessment for Grazing Authorization
Allotment #63034
EA# NM-060-99-012

Roswell Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
2909 West 2nd
Roswell, NM 88201

T3S R18E, T4S R17E, T4S R18E, T3S R19E, T4S R19E various sections

I. Introduction

When authorizing livestock grazing on public range, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has historically relied on a land use plan and environmental impact statement to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A recent decision by the Interior Board of Land Appeals, however, affirmed that the BLM must conduct a site-specific NEPA analysis before issuing a permit or lease to authorize livestock grazing. This environmental assessment fulfills the NEPA requirement by providing the necessary site-specific analysis of the effects of issuing a new grazing permit on this allotment. There are no projects planned for this allotment at this time. Any subsequent management activities will have a site specific analysis conducted at that time.

A. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of issuing a new grazing permit would be to authorize livestock grazing on public range on allotment #63034. The permit would specify the types and levels of use authorized, and the terms and conditions of the authorization pursuant to 43 CFR §§4130.3, 4130.3-1, and 4130.3-2.

B. Conformance with Land Use Planning

The Roswell Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (October 1997) has been reviewed to determine if the proposed action conforms with the land use plan's Record of Decision as required by 43 CFR 1610.5-3. The proposed action is consistent with the RMP/EIS.

C. Relationships to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans

The proposed action and alternative is consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1700 et seq.); the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 (43 U.S.C. 315 et seq.), as amended; the Clean Water Act (CWA)(33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.), as amended; the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C.

1535 et seq.) as amended; the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management and Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands.

II. Proposed Action and Alternatives

A. Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to authorize to W.H. and W.E. Corn Estate a grazing permit on allotment #63034 for 676 Animal Units (AUs) active use at 63% federal range and 324 AUs in temporary non-use. Grazing will be authorized from March 1 thru the last day of February of each year. The class of livestock is cattle, sheep, and horses.

B. No Permit authorization alternative:

This alternative would be not to issue a new grazing lease. There would be no livestock grazing authorized on public land.

III. Affected Environment

A. General Setting

Allotment #63034 is located in Lincoln County, about 30 miles southeast of Corona, New Mexico. This allotment contains 46,690 acres, 28,408 of which are Federal land.

This allotment is located within the Grassland vegetative community as identified within the Roswell RMP. The distinguishing feature for the grassland community is that grass species typically comprises 75% or more of the potential plant community. Short-grass, mid-grass, and tall-grass species may be found within this community. The community also includes shrub, half-shrub, and forb species. The percentages of grasses, forbs, and shrubs actually found at a particular location will vary with recent weather factors and past resource uses.

The following resources or values are not present or would not be affected: Prime/Unique Farmland, ACEC's, Native American Religious Concerns, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Hazardous/Solid Wastes, Wetlands/Riparian Zones. Cultural inventory surveys would continue to be required for federal actions involving surface disturbing activities. The impact of the proposed action and alternatives to minority or low-income populations or communities has been considered and no significant impact is anticipated.

B. Affected Resources

1. Soils: The soils present within this allotment belong to the following general mapping units:

Pastura-Deama-Darvey: Very shallow, shallow, and very deep, well drained, nearly level to moderately sloping soils; on hills, mesa sides, piedmonts, and valley sides.

Deama-Rock outcrop: Very shallow, and shallow, well drained, nearly level to very steep soils, and Rock outcrop; on mesa sides and breaks.

For more information, refer to Soil Survey of Lincoln County, New Mexico.

There is a certain amount of erosion that occurs naturally in this vegetation community. High winds in the spring and high intensity thunderstorms are the primary agents of soil transportation.

2. Vegetation: This allotment is within the grassland vegetative community as identified in the Roswell Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS). Vegetative communities managed by the Roswell Field Office are identified and explained in the RMP/EIS. Appendix 11 of the draft RMP/EIS describes the Desired Plant Community (DPC) concept and identifies the components of each community.

Vegetative monitoring was conducted on this allotment in 1983, 1987, 1992 and 1996 (photos only in 1996). The study locations on this allotment are in Loamy CP-2 and Shallow CP-2, and Limestone Hills CP-4 range sites. Analysis of the monitoring data indicates range is in good condition and trend is upward. The percent bare ground and rock fall within the parameters established by the Roswell RMP/EIS for this vegetative community. There is sufficient vegetation to meet multiple use objectives and to provide forage for the number of AUs permitted. Copies of the monitoring data and the analysis of the data is available at the Roswell Field Office.

The following table summarizes monitoring data for the allotment:

Monitoring Data Summary, Allotment Averages							
	Grasses	Forbs	Shrubs	Trees	Litter	Bare Ground	Rocks
Percent composition of vegetative cover	78.97	1.62	19.35	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percent Ground Cover	28.70		5.47		14.21	40.27	10.83

3. Wildlife: This allotment is located within the Macho Wildlife Habitat Area (WHA). The Macho Habitat Management Plan (HMP) was completed in 1986, with the primary objective of providing suitable pronghorn antelope habitat within the WHA by maintaining current quality habitat areas and improving those habitats that are in poor or fair condition. A second objective is to improve the overall distribution of antelope where possible with cooperation of the permittee.

Game species occurring within the area include mule deer, mourning dove, and scaled quail. Raptors that utilize the area on a more seasonal basis include the Swainson's, red-tailed, and ferruginous hawks, American kestrel, and great-horned owl. Numerous passerine birds utilize the grassland areas due to the variety of grasses, forbs, and shrubs. The most common include the western meadowlark, mockingbird, horned lark, killdeer, loggerhead shrike, and vesper sparrow.

The warm prairie environment supports a large number of reptile species compared to higher elevations. The more common reptiles include the short-horned lizard, lesser earless lizard, eastern fence lizard, coachwhip, bullsnake, prairie rattlesnake, and western rattlesnake.

A general description of wildlife occupying or potentially utilizing the proposed action area and associated Habitat Management Areas refer to the Affected Environment Section (p. 3-62 to 3-71) of the Draft Roswell RMP/EIS (9/1984).

4. Threatened and Endangered Species: There are no known resident populations of threatened or endangered species on the allotment. A list of federal threatened, endangered and candidate species reviewed for this EA can be found in Appendix 11 of the Roswell Approved RMP (AP11-2). Of the listed species, avian species such as the bald eagle and peregrine falcon may be observed in the general geographic area during migration or winter months. There are no known records of these species having occurred on the allotment. There are no designated critical habitat areas within the allotment.

5. Livestock Management: The ranch has 14 pastures and 4 traps. The classes of livestock are cattle, sheep, and horses. Livestock are rotated using a best pasture system in which the livestock are moved into the pastures with better forage conditions. A pasture gets over two months rest once every two years, depending on weather patterns. Livestock are distributed throughout a pasture by using the water locations and feeders to advantage.

Livestock are lost perennially to golden eagles, and occasional losses are to bobcats, coyotes, and mountain lion. Livestock are also lost to locoweed in those years in which it is abundant.

The last grazing permit for the allotment was for 676 AU's. Actual numbers of livestock on the allotment may be less than the permitted number depending on resource and economic conditions as determined by the operator.

6. Visual Resources: The allotment is located within a Class IV Visual Resource Management areas. The Class IV means that contrasts may attract attention and be a dominant feature in the landscape in terms of scale. However, the changes should repeat the basic elements of the landscape.

7. Water Quality: No natural, perennial surface water is found on federal land on this allotment. Small ephemeral drainages cross the allotment. The Arroyo Gallo, Wildcat Canyon, and Cowboy Draw are larger ephemeral drainages which cross the allotment.

8. Air Quality: Air quality in the region is generally good. The allotment is in a Class II area for the Prevention of Significant Deterioration of air quality as defined in the federal Clean Air Act. Class II areas allow a moderate amount of air quality degradation.

9. Floodplains: The following 100 year floodplains exist on federal land:
Macho Arroyo crosses 0.25 mile of federal land
Wildcat Canyon crosses 1 mile of federal land
Cowboy Draw crosses 2 ½ miles of federal land
Unnamed Draw (west side of ranch) crosses 2 miles of federal land.

(Federal Emergency Management Agency. 1978. Flood insurance rate map. Lincoln County, New Mexico).

10. Recreation: Since this allotment has no facility based recreational activities, only dispersed recreational opportunities occur on these lands. Recreational activities that occur include hunting, caving, sightseeing, Off Highway Vehicle Use, primitive camping, horseback riding and hiking.

There is legal and physical access to public lands. Off Highway Vehicle designation for public lands within this allotment are classified as "Limited" to existing roads and trails.

11. Cave/Karst: This allotment is located within a designated area of High Karst and Cave Potential. Although a complete significant cave or karst inventory has not been completed for the public lands located in this grazing allotment, a significant cave or karst feature(s) is known to exist within this allotment. Monitoring of the Cave/Karst feature(s) will be necessary to determine if protective measures are required in the future.

IV. Environmental Impacts

A. Impacts of the Proposed Action

1. Soils: Livestock remove the cover of standing vegetation and litter, and compact the soil by trampling. These effects can lead to reduced infiltration rates and increased runoff. Reduced vegetative cover and increased runoff can result in higher erosion rates and soil losses, making it more difficult to produce forage and to protect the soil from further erosion. These adverse effects can be greatly reduced by maintaining an adequate vegetative cover on the soil. Soil compaction and excessive vegetative use will occur at small, localized areas such as drinking locations, along trails and at bedding areas. Positive affects from the proposed action include the speeding up of the nutrient cycling process and chipping of the soil crust by hoof action.

2. Vegetation: Vegetation will continue to be grazed and trampled by domestic livestock as well as other herbivores. The area has been grazed by livestock since the early part of the 1900's, if not longer. Ecological condition and trend is expected to remain stable and/or improve over the long term at the permitted number of livestock. Vegetation monitoring indicates that there is an adequate amount of forage to meet multiple use objectives and for the proposed number of livestock.

3. Wildlife: Wildlife will continue to compete with domestic livestock for forage and browse. Cover, and other habitat requirements for wildlife will remain the same as the existing situation. With proper utilization levels there will be adequate cover and forage for wildlife species resulting in sustainable wildlife populations for those species that

occupy the area. Maintenance and availability of existing waterings will continue to prove to be a dependable water source for wildlife, as well as livestock.

4. Threatened/Endangered Species: Livestock grazing, as a result of issuance of the grazing permit, may affect, but not likely adversely affect the bald eagle. It is expected that habitat and range condition would be maintained or improved by authorizing grazing conducive with vegetation goals for watershed and wildlife habitat. Habitat for wintering bald eagles would not be negatively impacted by livestock grazing. There would be no effect to the peregrine falcon as important riparian habitat or potential nest sites are not found on the allotment.

5. Livestock Management: Livestock would continue to be grazed under the same management system and the same permitted numbers as they have in the past. Actual livestock numbers may be less than the permitted numbers depending on vegetative and economic conditions. No adverse impacts are anticipated.

6. Visual Resources: The continued grazing of livestock would not affect the form or color of the landscape, or the primary aspect of the vegetation within the allotment.

7. Water Quality: Direct impacts to surface water quality would be minor, short-term impacts during stormflow. Indirect impacts to water-quality related resources, such as fisheries, would not occur. The proposed action would not have a significant effect on ground water. Livestock would be dispersed over the allotment, and the soil would filter potential contaminants.

8. Air Quality: Dust levels under the proposed action would be slightly higher than under the no grazing alternative due to allotment management activities. The levels would still be within the limits allowed in a Class II area for the Prevention of Significant Deterioration of air quality.

9. Floodplains: Continued livestock grazing and allotment management activities would have negligible effect on floodplain function as long as additional development in the floodplain is avoided where practical.

10. Recreation: Grazing should have little or no impact on the dispersed recreational opportunities within this allotment, since the recreational use of these public lands are relatively low. The evidence or presence of livestock can negatively affect visitors who desire solitude, unspoiled landscape views or hike without seeing signs of livestock. However, grazing can benefit some forms or recreation, such as hunting, by creating new water sources for game animals.

11. Cave/Karst: Continued grazing of the allotment may affect significant caves or karst resources if protective measures are not followed. If monitoring determines that significant caves or karst features are being affected by grazing, additional protective

measures will be required. The protective measures could include, but are not limited to, the following actions: fencing sinks, cave entrances or arroyos from multiple-use impacts; removing check-dams, erosion control projects and stock ponds; closing roads; no chemical vegetation control. The area around significant caves or karst features should be treated sensitively, so no adverse impacts affect the cave or karst feature.

B. Impacts of the No Livestock Grazing Alternative.

1. Soils: Soil compaction would be reduced on the allotment around old trails and drinking troughs and there would be a small reduction in soil loss on the allotment.

2. Vegetation: It is expected that the number of plant species found within the allotment will remain the same, however, there would be small changes in the relative percentages of these species. Vegetation will continue to be utilized by wildlife. There would be an increase in the amount of standing vegetation.

3. Wildlife: Wildlife would have no competition with livestock for forage and cover. There would be no maintenance of livestock waters. As these waters became inoperable, water availability could become a critical limiting factor for many wildlife species.

4. T&E Species: There would be no change in the impacts on the Bald Eagle or peregrine falcon from the existing situation.

5. Livestock management: The forage from public land would be unavailable for use by the permittee. This would have a significant adverse economic impact to the livestock operation. The checkerboard land status on the allotment makes it economically infeasible to fence out the federal land and use only the private land. It would become uneconomical for the permittee to continue in the agricultural business.

6. Visual Resources: There would be no change in the visual resources.

7. Water Quality: There could be a slight improvement in water quality due to the minor reductions in sediment loading during stormflow.

8. Air Quality: There would be a slightly less dust under this under this alternative versus the proposed alternative, but this would be negligible when considering all sources of dust.

9. Floodplains: Changes in floodplain function would be negligible if livestock grazing was eliminated.

10. Recreation: This alternative would be beneficial to those recreationists who desire solitude and no livestock. If livestock waters are not maintained, hunting opportunities may be reduced and this could be a negative impact to hunters.

11. Cave/Karst: There would be no effect to this resource from this alternative.

V. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts of the grazing and no grazing alternatives were considered in Chapter 4 of Rangeland Reform '94 Draft Environmental Impact Statement and in Chapter 4 of the Roswell Resource Area Proposed RMP/EIS. The no livestock grazing alternative was not selected in either document.

On the allotment specific level, there will be no cumulatively significant impacts from the proposed action or from the no grazing alternative.

VI. Residual Impacts

The area has been grazed by livestock since the early part of the 1900's, if not longer. Vegetative monitoring studies have shown that grazing, at the current permitted numbers of animals, is sustainable. If the mitigation measures are enacted, then there would be no residual impacts to the proposed action.

VII. Mitigating Measures

Vegetation monitoring studies will continue to be conducted and the permitted numbers of livestock will be adjusted if necessary. If new information surfaces that livestock grazing is negatively impacting other resources, action will be taken at that time to mitigate those impacts.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/RATIONALE

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT: I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined the **proposed action** will not have significant impacts on the human environment and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

Rationale for Recommendations: The proposed action would not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation. The **proposed action** will be in compliance with the Roswell Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (October, 1997).

_____ _____

T. R. Kreager,
Date
Acting Assistant Field Office Manager - Resources
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